

LETTERS *to the Editor*

The Relationships of Medicine

To the Editor: The future of medicine in the United States as we know it to date is indeed quite bleak. The medical profession and the organizations representing that profession are at least in part responsible for the present attitude toward the field of medicine as a whole.

It is my opinion that much can be reversed even at this stage of deterioration. But to do this there needs to be some vigorous down to earth planning. The public must be made aware of the fact that the medical profession is in the very great majority interested in the people, in the poor, in the country with its many problems, in the government, with the many fiscal intermediaries, the insurance companies in general, industries, unions and any other parties which must deal closely with the medical profession.

There is an urgent need for increased and meaningful liaison between the hospitals, medical hospital committees, medical societies and local, state and national associations which relate directly to these general groups. At present there are many hours spent in meetings. These are in great measure segmented without any intercommunications. The left hand never knowing what the right hand is doing. Unity means strength. This strength can be used advantageously and honorably.

There also needs to be an increased liaison between the institutions and/or societies and committees named above with local, state and federal government on a meaningful level. The need for dialogue is imperative. It should always be with an open mind. There may be many times when a government policy is good. But we can always learn from one another and we can both be more flexible if one side knows the other side's position, problems and reasoning.

The same obtains in the dealings with fiscal intermediaries, unions and other agencies.

There is certainly a dire need for more liaison in some specific areas. One of these areas is the need for better understanding between hospital utilization committees and the insurance companies as well as the government. Here is one area where greater medical unity would produce a more prestigious effect. By unity I mean that each utilization committee should have a representative at a county committee level which could meet on call, or several times in one year. In this way it would be a county-wide effort. Comparison of problems and joint effort toward their solution would be much more forceful. It is my opinion that there is a marked need here. A well organized, honest, workable plan as it affects the medical profession in its treatment of patients, utilization of available space and empathy on a prudent level with the government and insurance companies is vital. However, we must never compromise the patients' welfare in order to placate an agency.

The area of public relationship is extremely urgent. The dialogue must be simple and crystal clear. The former aloofness that has existed within the profession is not healthy. Dignity, respect and admiration do not need aloofness as an ingredient for the attainment of those worthy goals.

Lastly, we must encourage fine, young, intelligent men and women to enter this noble healing profession. They must be made to feel a sense of honor and prestige to be associated with a group of professionals that know their own minds, have clear goals, know how to achieve their goals, are well organized and self-disciplined and retain the highest of moral codes.

If this is done the medical profession along with its paramedical colleagues will look forward to a much brighter and self-administering future.

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